



News Release

For immediate release: July 9, 2014

(14-093)

Contacts: [Marqise Allen](#), Communications Office
[Kelly Stowe](#), Communications Office

360-236-4072

360-236-4022

Mosquitoes test positive for West Nile virus: year's first are in Franklin Co.

Prevent disease by avoiding mosquito bites and making it harder for mosquitoes to reproduce

OLYMPIA — Mosquito samples collected in Franklin County tested positive for West Nile virus. It's the first sign that the virus is active in the state this season since mosquito and dead bird testing began last month. Testing will continue until fall when mosquito season ends.

Most people bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus won't become ill at all, yet some may have mild symptoms including headache and fever that go away without treatment. For some, West Nile virus infection can be very serious, and even fatal. Severe disease may include meningitis or encephalitis. Some neurological effects of the disease may be permanent. People over 50 and those with weak immune systems are at higher risk for serious illness.

"For a few people who are infected, West Nile virus can be very serious," said Dr. Kathy Lofy, state health officer. "Most people have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all, but it's not worth taking the risk, especially since the illness can be prevented by taking a few simple precautions."

Avoiding mosquito bites is the key to preventing infection. People who spend time outdoors should use a bug repellent proven to ward-off mosquitoes and should consider wearing long sleeves and pants when mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk.

Dumping standing or stagnant water around homes and businesses reduces the opportunity for mosquitoes to reproduce. Dumping water in wading pools, tires, or old flower pots, and changing water in pet dishes and bird baths at least twice a week can help. Keeping windows and door screens in good condition helps prevent mosquitoes from getting in.

Five counties (Yakima, Spokane, Benton, Franklin, Grant) had mosquito samples that tested positive for the virus [last mosquito year](#). Only one resident of the state became ill from the virus,

Mosquitoes test positive for West Nile virus

July, 9, 2014

Page 2

that person was exposed to the virus while traveling outside of Washington. The mosquito season with the most human cases in our state was [2009, when 38 people became ill](#).

[West Nile virus information](#), prevention tips, and [dead bird reporting](#) and testing information is available online.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

###